888 young, "not-yet-serious" young woman, partly because there is no
792 career involved, as there is in case of young men who become monks.
Though there are usually fewer widows then widowers (due to the
mortality in connection with childbirth), the lot of a widow is
not a happy one. The proverb says:

[539] "Now that my fortune (husband) has died,
what will my mother-in-law give me?"

888 Without the kin group, an aging man, especially if sick, blind
●735 or crippled, has little protection. The church is not eager to have
[792] him as a monk, for it can recruit younger men for its service, as
a career, and an old man is much less useful in the churchyard than
an old woman. He may, especially if landless, or in town, be re-
duced to beggary. There he sits at the approaches to the churches,
repeating his demanding, ceaseless litany: "Selä Medhane Aläm,
selä Maryam, selä Giyorgis" (For sake of the Savior, of Mary, of
St. George), stretching out an open hand. Sometimes he may send
out a child to beg for him, either because he is too bashful, or
is using it as a technique. Little boys will thus attach themselves
to a potential donor, repeating "babba, babba" (babytalk for "daddy").
[608] They have already learned the concept of artificial kinship to
establish human relationships.

4. The End of Life: Eulogy; Memorial Services and Feasts.

763 When an elder is close to death, other elders from among his
nearest kin come with his confessor, and say to him: "Confess
yourself". When he has done so, they ask him for his last will:
"What do you give to your children, and for your soul (i.e. to the
church, through the confessor, to the poor)". While fields and
cattle are given to the descendants, (the former only in patri-
lineal descent), personal belongings such as exhide mats, shamma

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

643 There are many royal farms belonging to the Prester,
735 in which a great quantity of bread is gathered, which is given to honourable persons, and the poor, and to poor monasteries and churches, without Prester John making any profit of the produce and revenue of these farms, but only alms.

241 In all the country there is much bread, wheat and barley; in other lands there is more millet than wheat or barley, in these, and where wheat and barley, there is much taff and dagusha (seeds not known to us), pulse, beans, pease, and all vegetables; and in other lands all sorts of grain and vegetables in great quantity and abundance. There are
312 many water springs, but no fountains made of stone. In the town of Aquaxumo, where the Queens Saba and Candacia were, there are many wells and tanks made with good masonry.

532 In the town of Aquaxumo there are images very well made, and figures of lions and dogs, and oxen, and other antiquities made of stone. In this town Queen Candacia became a Christian by the advice of her eunuch, whom St. Philip baptized by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

491 In all this country there is no bridge of stone or of wood;
[563] in no part of the kingdoms or lordships of Prester John are there Jews. There are infinite quantities of sugar canes,
137 and they do not know how to make it; grapes and peaches are ripe in the month of February and end in April: there are many oranges, lemons and citrons, and few pot herbs, because they do not plant them.

136 Animals, namely lions, ounces, tigers, wolves, deer, antas,[1] wild cows, foxes, lynxes,[2] wild boars, porcupines, civet cats, roedeer, gazelles, elephants, and other animals not known to us, of which the country is full, except two which I never saw there, namely bears and rabbits.

Birds, partridges of three kinds, like ours, other fowls

[1] *Anta* is a South American animal. [2] Probably hyænas.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

261 To make me forget you, this medicine is right:
291 Food and water, sleep and the night.
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Love and porridge must be taken while hot;
Once cool, those who would taste are a lot.

• • •

The *ǐnjarā* I have, my lass;
I wait for you the *wat** to pass.†

• • •

Your father and your mother have vowed to keep from meat;
But you, their very daughter, innards do you eat.‡

261 Eating and drinking provide expressive symbolism in social interaction as
264 well as in verse. They form the primary axis of social life among the Amhara.
291 The exchange of *gurshā* is but a specialized form of the general pattern of
155 expressing sociability through feeding and being fed. Camaraderie consists to
57 a large extent of eating from the same *ǐnjarā* basket, and the etymology of the word for "friend," *bālīnjarā*, is the same as that for the English "com-
[273] panion," someone with whom one shares bread. At any indoor gathering barley beer is served continuously. The visit of a guest at any time of day calls for "a little coffee," a euphemism for as much food and drink as the
[776] host can command. In some Amhara areas a special kind of spirit, the *ṭonin*, is assigned the specific task of punishing persons who infringe the etiquette of dispensing and receiving food.[12]

594 From this it is but a short step to politics and morals. The production of
155 large banquets is one of the essential arts of government in Abyssinia—
[554] *panem*, if not *circenses*. The stature of a big man depends partly upon the number of persons who customarily dine at his expense. A mān's Christian-
577 ity, moreover, is judged by his generosity in feeding others, a virtue that is
554 eulogized at times by parading his *ǐnjarā* baskets around the field. A truly
574 Christian Amhara is known by the regularity and scale with which he pre-
155 pares memorial feasts for his departed kin, drinks in some religious fraternal
[735] association, and holds an annual feast (*sīḳer*) in which food is distributed to the poor.
155 Oral activity is prominent, moreover, not only as a primary source of
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[263] * *Wat* is the sauce in which the *ǐnjarā* is dipped.

† The gold meaning is: "I'll wait for you until the others leave."

‡ "To eat someone's innards" is an idiom meaning: "to make him fall in love." The gold meaning is thus: "You made me love you."

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

older or more prestigious males are addressed as *gāshē* ("my shield"); the corresponding term for females is *etēyē* ("my sister"). Much older people are addressed by words signifying "father" or "mother."

It is true that the forms of respect toward superiors are often repeated mechanically and sometimes serve to cover up a distinctly hostile disposition toward certain superiors. They nevertheless do represent to some extent a genuine solidaristic sentiment—perhaps the most profound and influential social sentiment in the Amhara social system. It rests in the last analysis on the fact that the Amhara family develops a pronounced sense of filial devotion as well as habits of filial obedience. Amhara society can dispense with horizontal solidarities and communal attachments because it is held together, sufficiently for traditional purposes, at least, by an infinite network of "father-son" relationships.

The egoistic element in the hierarchical pattern is further modified by a sort of joking relationship that sometimes develops between inferiors and superiors. The harsh interrogation of inferiors at times shades into a sort of wry banter; sons or servants may be called "thief" or "scoundrel" in an undertone of unmistakable affection. At times, moreover, the direction of the jesting may be reversed. Amhara servants are noted for playing practical jokes on their masters, which the latter usually appreciate when the jests are clever.[21] Here again, wax and gold is the perfect medium—for expressing aggression against a superior while at the same time appearing to maintain the respect relationship. The following couplet, attributed to Naggādrās Tassamā Eshatē, aptly illustrates this genre:

Ennānta maḳuānnentotch ba-mīn waṭ balātchu?
Eññām ba-shurwātchen ennānṭam bāssātchu.

What sauce, my lords, was on your plate?
We had but peas; 'twas fish you ate.[22]

Here the poet appears to be complimenting the nobles on their more elegant cuisine at a banquet; but there is a pun on the word *bāssātchu,* literally "with your fish," for it may also be taken to mean "you took more than your share."

Within the hierarchical pattern, finally, one finds expressed a certain amount of generosity which, as we have suggested, is relatively uncommon in relations among peers. This appears in connection with the *begging* and *almsgiving* which occur in many sectors of Amhara society. For church students beyond the elementary level, begging is the primary means of livelihood. Youths who have left home to study *zēmā* or *qenē* with a master wander about today, as in former times, carrying small baskets and pleading: "For the sake of Mary! For the sake of God!" in order to get their daily morsels. The activity is so organized that when a large number of students

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

live near the same master, they divide up the neighboring countryside to avoid duplication in their begging.

The ordained clergy are themselves given to begging, for items ranging from contributions to the local church to petty personal effects. High-ranking visitors to their locale are customarily made the objects of such solicitations. Another type of begging is practiced by the minstrels who wander about the country with their one-stringed fiddles and fecund wit, coaxing contributions from any audience they can capture. In addition to these there are numerous professional beggars—the maimed, the diseased, and the poverty-stricken—who attach themselves to a well-attended church or monastery if they are unable to travel. The *lālibalā* is a notable type within this category of mendicants.[23]

In addition to honoring the periodic appeals of beggars, "big men" are supposed to provide yearly feasts (*gǐber*) at which beggars of all the above descriptions are fed. In all these instances, the solicitation and bestowal of charity contributes a solidaristic element to the network of personal relations among the Amhara.

The foregoing analysis of forms of interaction among the Amhara has been undertaken in order to gain material for generalizing about a psychological disposition. Our unspoken, tautological assumption has been that the ways in which individuals typically relate to social objects (i.e., other persons and collectivities) represent the sociologically relevant aspects of their psychology. Egoism and solidarism have been used here as concepts for depicting one dimension of "social character," using this term in the specific sense of comprising those aspects of personality which are both socially shared and constitutive of those actions that are oriented to social objects. We may now attempt to summarize the preceding discussion with the following definition of Amhara social character as it relates to the concept of individualism: The Amhara is primarily disposed to structure interaction in terms of self-assertion, dissension, and distrust, and to be indifferent to the concept of civil community. At the same time this egoistic orientation is blended with a warm and kindly sense of sociability, an occasional mood of generosity, and a refined sensibility regarding differences in status and the readiness to pay deference accordingly.

INDEPENDENCE VERSUS CONSTRAINT

In the previous section we considered the nature of the individual's orientation toward others and toward collectivities in Amhara society. Our question now is the converse: what order of demands is made upon individuals by the institutions of that society? Specifically, we shall be concerned primarily with the degree to which the norms which govern institutional roles are

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 794 795 are left free to a large extent. Since every day of the month except the thirtieth is sanctified by dedication to some saint, Mass must be performed virtually *121 79 every day, a norm which is actually fulfilled by churches which have a numerous clergy. The burden for individual clergymen is kept small by a system of rotation. The average parish church will have services perhaps ten to fifteen times a month, which is still too often for heavy popular attendance. Even on Sundays and the most important holidays, when the laity are expected to attend, their participation is excused by other considerations. Those who have eaten earlier in the day, who have had sexual relations the night before, or who are harboring a grudge in their "stomach" are not even supposed to come to church. If they do come, they sit outside the wall chatting with one another while the Mass is performed inside.

*121 794 795 783 Customs concerning Communion and Confession likewise give the individual a wide range of freedom. Partaking of the Communion is not required of anyone; the experience simply is available to those who are ritually pure (children, and those who have married by the *querbān*), if they are so inclined. Confession is not mandatory, but according to personal inclination. Every man has the right to choose his own personal confessor or "soul-father," though if satisfied with the one of his father, he may retain him. (A woman adopts the confessor of her husband.) The soul-father's advice may be sought when a problem arises. If a man sins—breaks the fast, works on a holiday, commits theft or murder—he is supposed to confess. If he chooses to do so, the soul-father will prescribe a certain penance—fasting an extra amount, sleeping on the floor for a period, giving something to the poor or to the church. But the initiative is entirely up to the sinner and probably more often than not he keeps the offense to himself. The proportion of Amhara who keep every fast strictly, go to church a few times a month, and confess their transgressions to the soul-father is small; in the estimate of one Amhara informant, less than five per cent.

*121 794 575 Still greater permissiveness may be observed in connection with the religious fraternal associations known as the *māhebar*. The *māhebar* consists of a group of people from the same general area, usually of the same sex, who meet once a month on the day devoted to the saint for whom the association is named. The place of meeting rotates among the homes of the members, and the soul-father of the host is always present to bless the occasion. The meetings consist of much eating, drinking, and conviviality. Membership in a *māhebar* is purely voluntary, and the individual who wishes to join one usually has a choice among several in a given area.*

For the Amhara laity, then, a few burdensome ritual and fiscal constraints

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[735] * There is a variant of the *māhebar* known as the *tenbatī*, whose members take turns in providing food for the clergy and poor folk on Sundays.

criteria. His personal interest means to the student rapid advancement through the curriculum, dining at the master's table, and enjoying privileged information of a non-ecclesiastical nature. Without his patronship, a student is committed to years of uncertainty and physical misery, scraping to meet his subsistence needs, paying his "tuition" in demeaning services, such as gathering the master's wood and tilling his garden, and in deferential performances, particularly washing the master's feet and those of his visitors.

The kiyne student is further troubled by the many ailments which are his lot. He lives, with one or two of his mates, in a wretched lean-to of twigs and wild grasses, which proves to be poor protection against the cold winter rains. Often he owns only the toga on his back, and it, like him, remains unwashed for the duration of the long dry season. Thus, ikek (scrofula) becomes his badge, and kurtimat (joint pains) and weba (fever) his recurrent companions. The student's diet is his special concern, since it conspicuously lacks the combination of wholesome wot (stew) and injera (pancake-like bread) necessary to sustain good health. He obtains most of his food by begging in the town and local hamlets, where he generally receives scraps of stale injera bread, always inadequate and potentially pathogenic (i.e., likift bearing, threatening fever and

severe abdominal pain). The wot he eats is invariably the humblest type, aliyca, lacking the cayenne-based ingredient (berberiy) necessary to man and digestive wosfat. His injera is made of pulses instead of proper cereals, and often he has nothing but a handful of parched grain (kolow) with which to satisfy his hunger and truculent wosfat. In addition to persistent abdominal complaints (yihod himem), students are often afflicted with dafint (night-blindness) which is particularly stressful in the context of the student's nocturnal activities.

There is also danger from animals, the vicious and often rabid hamlet dogs, which plague him as he begs; from ganels which gather outside the church yard waiting to suffocate him in his sleep, to tempt him to sacrilege with their calls just as they tempted Saint Basil, to waylay him when he goes beyond the church yard for nocturnal urination.

The Growth of Mercantile Interests. With the exception of those few students who enjoy the kiyne master's patronage, or who receive parental support, the young scholars must periodically interrupt the course of study for excursions into the lowlands in order to meet their subsistence needs. In early September, after the rains have ended and the countryside is covered with verdure, kiyne students journey to the kola lands to gather the wild granta grass. The granta must be sun dried for

*793 869 222 five weeks before it is ready to be woven into a tsifit, a food hamper and table around which the Amhara meal is eaten. Because the students cannot afford so long a hiatus from their studies, the grasses are dried only a week or so, in order to lighten them for the trip back [735] to the highlands. During their stay in the lowlands, the students support themselves by begging food from local farmers. Enterprising students often gather twice the amount of gramta they can carry, leaving the surplus to be taken up to the highlands in January.

+793 869 [442] The gramta is brought to the student's hut at the kiyne school for storage and drying. Although the students are anxious to sell immediately upon drying, both price and demand are low then, since the weavers, peasant [286] women, have no leisure for tsifit making until March. In *[192] the meanwhile, the student makes either traditional umbrellas of gramta for sale at the regional market, or seleyen, shrouds which he sells in the churchyard to mourners.

[434] Students also beg crops, a portion of which they consume and the remainder of which is sold at market. For a four week period, during October and November, the student begs a traditional double handful of pulses from farmers. During a two to three month period from February to April, students beg cereals and other crops (especially, cayenne). Because the amounts of produce

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obtained are often considerable (100 kilos and more), arrangements must be made for obtaining a donkey.

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However great his needs may be, a student cannot expect to participate in all of these activities, since this would leave insufficient time for his kiyne studies. However, gramta gathering and pulse begging are sometimes both engaged in during a single year.

Thus, the young debtera student finds himself transported from the benign enviornment of his natal parish to one in which only self-reliance and resourcefulness can secure his chosen goals and maintain his physical well-being. Ultimately, he must make a bitter choice

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between professional and material satisfaction. The profits from gramta sales, and the foodstuffs he has begged would much ameliorate his misery. Yet, in spite of his pressing subsistence requirements, the student sets aside only a minor portion of his profits for these needs. He exchanges most of these goods for money, which he retains as a fluid and durable capital with which to purchase necessary professional articles (mainly books) and to support his future commercial ventures. During the years of his kiyne studies, his assets accumulate at the rate of perhaps E$25. per annum.[25]

[25] A significant sum where per capita gross national product is E$116. (EAS:134); E$1.=U.S.$0.40.

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*793 example of ganel calling.

*756 The Ecclesiastical Identity. While the secular
*793 healer is indistinguishable from other peasants, the debtera is conspicuous by his ecclesiastical identity, with his distinctive dress, liturgical performances at the Mass, and conversational presence in the churchyard.
*756 The memher teacher of kiyne is most visible of all deb-
*793 teras, not so much by his appearance as through all the
875 activities of his ubiquitous students. The services of these students are generally indispensible to establishing, and often maintaining, public recognition of the
• [735] debtera's claims to the "awakiy" title. These students depend on the charity of local folk for much of their sustenance. In order to avoid over-exploiting the generosity of one area, or neglecting another, the students customarily devise a circuit composed of town wards and surrounding hamlets, through which they systematically beg, in pairs of gwadenas. Their visits, weighted in favor of the more affluent folk, serve the debtera memher's abinet practice in two ways. First, they advertise the debtera's presence and communicate information about his abinet services. Laymen are generally reluctant to approach a debtera directly, until learning whether he is capable of providing desired services and is also willing to do so. By posing questions to the mendicant students, the debtera's public obtains infor-

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ailments are limited to redefining the sickman's domestic responsibilities, and are traced mainly to a loss of vigor resulting from his malady.

*756 These ailments can be sorted into two categories.
*793 Included in the first are all maladies whose physical
*763 effects are trivial, and most of those ailments whose effects are acute (whether serious, such as koruba pox, or non-serious, such as catarrh). These ailments are infrequently brought to an awakiy debtera, because either they are susceptible to effective and relatively inexpensive secular therapies, or they run courses too brief for a client to determine whether an awakiy debtera's services are necessary or to arrange for the administration of his therapy. The person who has been restored to health after such ailments returns to the personal and social states he enjoyed prior to the disease episode.

734 In the second category are chronic and serious ailments that are characterized by both visible physical destruction and poor prognosis (e.g., leprosy and elephantiasis). The person suffering such an ailment also experiences the progressive constriction of his social field, as the affects of his ailment prevent him from resuming his normal economic and social responsibili-
[735] ties. Where a family's resources are insufficient to maintain non-productive adults, the sickman must leave

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his hamlet to become a mendicant, begging from alms-givers at the gates of large and famous churches. Even the sickman whose economic circumstances enable him to remain at home may depart, to seek an efficacious tebel spring, once locally available therapies prove ineffective.

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Among the ailments of this category, leprosy is considered particularly loathsome. In the abstract, it is associated with a hereditary vector; in practice, the leper's neighbors fear contact with him, and the sickman who remains at home is physically segregated in a hut of his own, away from other residents of the hamlet. Because marriages are difficult to arrange for the primary relatives of lepers, the son of a leper frequently chooses to move away from the paternal hamlet to some place where his family's affliction is unknown.

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The absence of more profound moral consequences for either category of ailment can be explained, first, by the fact that associations existing between the sickman and sanction-wielding supernaturals are unaffected by either illness or cure, since these maladies are linked to non-purposive pathogenic agencies, such as gerifta and likift. Further, effective cures are either secular, and thus require the therapeutic assistance of no sanction-wielding supernaturals, or, in the case of tebel therapies, rely on only the socially sanctioned supernaturals of the Church.

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